

Chapter 6: Other Subjects

Besides what was said in the previous chapters about our 'belief, there are other specialties in our ideas that will follow in this chapter.

The Rationale Goodness and Badness

We believe that human wisdom can appreciate many good things to distinguish from the bad ones, and right from wrong; by his blissful power of distinction which God has given him. Even before coming of the prophets with the law, man could rationally distinguish many good and bad. For instance he could easily understand that justice is good and oppression is bad.

Man could know that some ethics such as truthfulness, honesty, bravery and generosity are good deeds; and that, lying; betrayal and jealousy are bad morals. But as the wisdom is not able to comprehend all that is good or bad, and his knowledge is limited, the prophets were sent with book for guidance and the law to improve man's faculty and morals, helping his wisdom. In that of course we deny not the value of the independent wisdom which comprehends the facts.

If so, the monotheism, the prophetic missions, and the divine religion, will all be futile! For all these important tenets are basically proved by the reasoning of the wisdom. It is evident that the law and the commandments are only acceptable when the principles which are monotheism and prophethood have been proved to us through wisdom, and by the religion itself.

God's Justice

We do believe in God's justice, and we say it is impossible for God to oppress any creature of His at the least amount, or to punish His servants without any reason or to forgive them without a reason. It is also impossible that God may leave His promises unfulfilled. We also know it to be impossible that God may abandon His servants without giving them necessary guidance. Associating such indecent and foul labels with the Omnipotent God is clearly far from the truth and reality.

Man's Freedom

We believe that God has created Man free. He has given us free will and we have options to do what we may do. If not so, why should He punish a sinner who is supposed to be compelled to commit sins?

To make it short, rationally distinguishing good and bad as mentioned above, and independent wisdom are bases for the acceptance of divine religion, scriptures and the prophets, but not enough, because we have a limited wisdom, by which we cannot grasp all that we need. So we have to have divine guidance for improving our wisdom and understanding.

Wisdom Serves as A Reference in our Religious Jurisprudence

Following what we mentioned above, one of the principle references in Islam is wisdom's reasoning. The wisdom comprehends something definitely and then judges. For instance; if we find no reason or proof in the book or in the prophet's methodical way (sunnat) to show us that oppression, betrayal, lying and committing murder are very bad and unlawful deeds, we would certainly reject them by the reasoning of our wisdom, and we make sure that God never likes us to do such things. This is why we conclude that wisdom too is a divine base of our religious judgments.

The Holy Qur'an is full of verses showing the importance of the wisdom as a base or reference for the judgments in religious research:

"In the creation of the heavens, and the earth, and the alternation of day and night, there are indeed signs for men of wisdom and understanding." (Holy Qur'an, 3: 190)

Some reveal the aim of sending the scriptures to improve the power of wisdom and understanding of man:

"See how have we explained our signs variously so that they may understand." (Holy Qur'an, 6:65)

"We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran, in order that you may use your wisdom." (Holy Qur'an, 12:2)

Some of the verses urge people to use their minds so as to distinguish good from bad:

"Say can a blind be held equal to one who can see? Why don't you then think?" (Holy Qur'an, 6:50)

And the worst of the moving creatures in the sight of God are those who do not use their common sense so as to understand:

"For the worst of beasts in the sight of God, are those who are deaf and dumb, not using their

wisdom to understand!" (Holy Qur'an, 8:22)

So how can we ignore the importance of the wisdom, understanding and thinking in Islam?

More about God's Justice

As we have already mentioned we believe that God is just and He never oppresses; because cruel acts are indecent and unbecoming to Him:

"And thy Lord will treat no one with injustice." (Holy Qur'an, 18:49)

If some people are punished in this world or in the hereafter, it is due to their own deeds:

"It is not God who oppresses them, but they wrong their own soul." (Holy Qur'an, 9:70)

Not only man, but rather no creature in the world is ever oppressed by God:

"Allah wants no injustice to any of His creatures." (Holy Qur'an, 3:108)

All these verses are somehow a guidance towards making use of our wisdom.

Rejection of What You Cannot Do

We believe that God will never oblige a duty to anyone who cannot do it:

"Allah will not charge a soul with a duty that cannot be fulfilled by him." (Holy Qur'an, 2:286)

The Philosophy of the Painful Accidents

We believe that the painful accidents that sometimes occur, such as the earthquakes, calamities and misfortunes, might be that of God's punishment, as it was with the case of the people of Lot:

"When our decree was issued, we turned (their cities) upside down, and rained down on them brimstones, hard as baked clay, spread layer on layer." (Holy Qur'an, 11:82)

And about the ungrateful and rebellious people of Saba, God says:

"But they turned away (from their Lord) and we sent against them the flood from the Dams." (Holy Qur'an, 34:16)

Some other painful incidents are to admonish people and to teach them lessons:

"Mischief has appeared on land and sea by what the hands of man have earned, that Allah may give them a taste of some of their deeds, in order that they may return back from evil." (Holy

Qur'an, 30:41)

Other pains are what our hands make it and are due to our ignorance and carelessness:

"Whatever good happens to you (o man!) is from Allah: but whatever evil happens to you; is from yourself." (Holy Qur'an, 4:79)

The Existence is Ruled By The Best of Orders

We believe that the created world, or the world of creation is the scenery on which the bests of orders act. In other word, the existing order that controls the world is the best one that can possibly exist. Here, everything has an account of its own. There is nothing in contrast to justice and goodness; and if bad is seen, it belongs to people or the creatures.

We repeat again that God's justice is one of the most important bases of Islamic insight, without which the tenets such as the monotheism, prophethood and doomsday will be endangered and misunderstood. We have a tradition that Imam Sadiq(a.s) has emphasized on monotheism and God's justice as the main principles of the religion and then he adds: "Whatever is becoming and fit for you, is not allowable to God. Justice is that you do not relate something to God, which doing it puts a blame upon you."

Visiting the Tombs of The Messengers And Imams (Pilgrimage)

We believe that pilgrimages for visiting the tombs of the Messengers and Imams, as well as the scholars and the martyrs, is a definite religious precept which has to be observed, although not a must.

In many books of the Ahlul Sunnah scholars, just as those written by Shi'as, many traditions are narrated from the prophet that he has recommended the precept or pilgrimage. To collect all such traditions will make a voluminous book.

Throughout the history of Islam, our great scholars, and all groups of Muslims have done that with much care, and books are written about the adventures of their pilgrimages. It is evident that nobody takes his visit to a tomb for worship; as such worship only belongs to God. The purpose of visiting the tomb of a great man is to respect him and to pay regards, meanwhile seeking their intercession. It is also narrated that even the prophet himself often went to visit the Cemetery of Baqi' and saluted the dead in their graves. Therefore no one should doubt the lawfulness of such pilgrimages in Islam.

The Philosophy of The Mourning Ceremonies

We believe that the mourning ceremonies, for the martyrs, especially the martyrs of Karbala will serve to maintain the monument of such dear ones, and keep us aware of their self-sacrifices for the sake of God and Islam in some occasions, particularly the first ten days of Muharram, the period in which Imam Hussain(a.s) and his faithful companions were cruelly martyred, we perform the mourning ceremonies.

We explain their aims, and express our deep regards for them and by that infuse new blood in our veins.

In the year 61 Hijri, Yazid a sinful man and a stranger with Islam, succeeded the throne of Islamic caliphate. When he asked Imam Hussain (a.s) to take the oath of allegiance, Imam refused to swear fealty. Yazid insisted and Imam rejected and left Mecca for Iraq. In Karbala, Imam and his seventy two companions and household were surrounded by a great many troops of Yazid. Imam and his companions defended their attacks and fought their enemies boldly to their last breath. All the men, (Imam Hussain (a.s) and his companions) were martyred, and their women and children were taken captives.

Soon after that the blood of Imam boiled and stirred strange excitements among his contemporary Muslims. Groups revolted in turn, aiming at vengeance for the bloodshed. These frequent revolutions gave an end to the nasty life of the Omayid dynasty. All the revolting groups had but one slogan "Vengeance for Imam's Bloodshed." Today the rise and martyrdom of Imam Hussain (a.s) is a pattern and a program in our daily life to make us stand firmly against any oppression and cruelty.

Some of our slogans that were taken from Imam Hussain's bloody history like: "far be abjections from us" or "life is faith and endeavor" have been of immense use in our past and present, urging us not to undergo any unjustified demand or oppressions.

To brief our word here, paying regards to the reminiscence of the great martyrs of Karbala, and else, will infuse new blood of valiance, bravery and self-sacrifice into our veins and will teach us how to live an honorable and proud life, and this is why we try to revive the reminiscence of our martyrs by renewing the mourning ceremonies every year better than the last. Strangers may not know what we do and what we are aiming at or achieving by doing so. They think of it as a mere historical incident that must have been forgotten and covered with the dust of age, but we do know its importance and effect in our past and present history.

It is written in all the famous Islamic histories that "after the battle of Uhad the prophet passed near a house from which the sounds of mourning and wailing for the martyrs were heard the prophet said: "But no one mourns for Hamzih (The Master of Martyrs)."

Saad Ibn Maaz who was a near companion of the prophet from the group of Helpers, heard that and ordered their women to go and mourn and lament for Hamzih, the faithful uncle of the prophet who was mutilated in the battle field of Uhad. Evidently this lamentation was not something specialized to Hazarat Hamzih. It rather is a means of infusing new blood into the veins of Muslims.

Now it is Ashura, the 10th of Muharram 1417 Hijri (1976). A great emotion and enthusiasm is seen throughout the Shi'a world. Children, teenagers, young people, adults, man and woman have all dressed in black and attended the mourning ceremonies of the Martyrs of Karbala. They are so strangely excited and have changed minds that if they be invited to fight the enemies of Islam, they all will take arm and rush to the battlefield and do not avoid any sort of self-sacrifices.

It is just as if the blood of those martyrs flow in their veins, and that Imam and his companions have been slain just now. They sing epic songs and poems full of slogans against colonization, and oppression and in favor of proud and exalted death over an abject life. We hold this incident as a great moral capital that we have to observe it and keep it safe.

The Temporary Marriage

We believe that the temporary marriage is lawful and in our religious jurisprudence, it is termed "mut'ah". From this motive, marriage is of two kinds: the permanent one which is not limited to a time frame and the temporary marriage which is for a limited period, which the couple will agree on. In many respects both of the wedlock are the same.

As for the dower, the freedom of the female spouse from any impediments and rules, and regulations for the children are similar for both these types of marriages.

There are also some differences between the two wedlock such that the male spouse does not need to pay the alimony, or that the couple do not inherit each other (of course their children do inherit their parents). However we have taken this order out of the Holy Qur'an:

"All women other than those mentioned here are lawful for you provided you seek them in marriage with your wealth in a modest conduct (chastity), and not by fornication give them their dower for the enjoyment you have had with them, as your duty, but it shall be of no blame on you to make any agreement among yourselves; and Allah is All Knowing All Wise" (Holy Qur'an, 4:24)

Many of the great commentators have explained that the above verse aims at the temporary marriage.

In Tabary's commentary book it is written that this verse indicates the temporary marriage and that many of the prophet's companions have testified to it. In many famous tradition books such as Sahih Bokhari, Sahih Muslim and Musnad Ahmad, there are traditions about the temporary marriage declaring it a lawful religious act which used to be done in the life time of the prophet. There are also some narrations in these books that deny and reject it.

Some scholars believe that during the life time of the prophet it was done, but after the prophet it was forbidden by Omar the second Khalif. In the famous book Sunan of Beihaghi (v7, p206) it is written that Omar said: "Two Mut'ahs were decreed by the prophet of God: temporary marriage and Hajj (special rites in pilgrimage) which I declare them both as unlawful!" So the Ahlul Sunnah scholars have different ideas about that; some admit and some reject, but the Shi'a scholars take it to be lawful with unanimous approval.

We believe that if temporary marriage be not misused, it will give an adequate answer to many questions of the young generation of our time, who cannot afford a permanent wedlock, or those in long journeys either for economical or educational purposes. Those who work against the temporary marriage are

cleaning the road to fornication and obscene acts particularly in our time in which the age of marriage is delayed and lustful means are abundant. Closing the door of lawful marriages results in to opening the doors of fornication and evil sexual acts.

Let me repeat once again that we reject all sorts of misuse in this respect such a making a play toy out of it or turning a woman into a means for lusts and passions instead of a real wife. On the other hand, none should leave a good and useful law unattended, because some may use it in a bad way.

A Brief History of Shi'a

We believe that the Shi'a sect was founded in the lifetime of our prophet, and its name was taken out of his words and we have many clear reasons to prove that many commentators of the Qur'an believe the following verse refers to Imam 'Ali(a.s) and his sectarians (Shi'a):

"Those who have faith and do righteous deeds, are the best of creatures." (Holy Qur'an, 98:7)

Soyuti, the famous commentator has narrated in his Durul Mansur that Jabir said: "We were in presence of the prophet, when Imam 'Ali(a.s) arrived there. As soon as the prophet saw him he said:

'Upon him, to whose hands lays my life, 'Ali and his Shi'a (sectarians) will have salvation on doomsday'.

Then the prophet recited the above-mentioned verse. After that, whenever Imam 'Ali(a.s) came to a gathering of the prophet, we used to say: 'the best of god's creatures has come'." This tradition with a little difference is also narrated by Ibn Abbas, Abu Barza, Ibn Marduya, and Atiya Ofi.

Therefore the name 'Shi'a' was given to the lovers and followers of Imam 'Ali(a.s) by the prophet himself and not by the Safavies dynasty as some with very low knowledge have said. We respect and esteem all the other Islamic sects, and stand in one line of prayer with them, and perform the rites of pilgrimage as they do, and cooperate with them in all common Islamic goals and fields. Yet as a Shi'a we do have some particularities which were noted by our prophet, and this is why we have chosen this school.

The Legacy of the Prophet's Household

The followers of this school (Shi'a) have so many traditions from the prophet which are conveyed through Imam 'Ali (a.s) or other Imams. These have all been collected and classified, and form the main source of Shi'a's religious jurisprudence. The most important books among the collections are four, and are known as Kutub al-Arba'a (Four Books). These are firstly, Kafi, secondly, Man la Yazaraul Faki, thirdly, Tazeeb and fourth of all, Estibsar. Not that, all the traditions found in these four books, or elsewhere are indisputably correct or acceptable.

Each tradition as we said, has a series of documents and narrators that are to be analyzed and confirmed. If all the documents and narrators prove to be right and trustworthy, then the tradition may be considered true and accepted. Such investigations about the traditions are the task of religious experts

and scholars. Therefore the Shi'a's collected works in the field of tradition differs with that of the Ahlul Sunnah. The way Bokhari and other Sunni scholars such as Muslim approached such matters in their collected works differ from that of our authors.

Their criterion of right and wrong is only the author's distinction. So to understand the belief of a Sunni, it is enough to get access to their important tradition books, called 'Sahih'. Contrary to that, Shi'a have collected all the traditions that they could; narrated by the Imams just to be investigated, judged, approved, and then be accepted for action. This is only to be undertaken by learned and trusted authorities and religious specialists.

The Two Important Books

Among the important sources of Shi'a, there are two very important books. The first one is known as Nahjul Balagha, a work collected by Sharif Razi a thousand years ago, consisting of the speeches, letters, and some quotations of Imam 'Ali (a.s). The eloquence in the verses is so great and the meanings so deep, that it makes the work so strangely attractive to all sorts of minds! We wish not only the Muslims, but the non-Muslims too could be acquainted with this amazing book, in order to know what is to be known in the fields of monotheism, resurrection, ethics, social and political affairs.

The second important book is called Shahifa Sajadiya, a collection of the best and the most beautiful verses on prayers having the deepest meaning. It may teach us how to pray to the Lord and to purify our soul by that prayer. The whole book is the collection of many fervent prayers in the form of hymns, and narrated by our fourth Imam, 'Ali Ibn Hussain (a.s), who is titled 'Sajad' (One who Often Bows to God).

The Last Word

Whatever we wrote in this collection is a summary of the opinion and belief of the followers of our prophet's household; i.e. the Shi'a sect of Islam. This is without any change or deviation, confirmed by Holy Qur'an and to a less extent by traditions. We aimed to write the subjects in brief and this, we did. It may be concluded here that this work:

1. Is a trustworthy reference that clearly presents the Shi'a belief and ideas. Here by all the other Muslims and non-Muslims many have access to firsthand information about the Shi'a.
2. This work can be reasoning for God, to those who judge us with inadequate information, or take their information about us, from doubtful persons or our enemies; or from books of no importance.
3. To study this work will show the reader that the difference between Shi'a and other Islamic sects is not that much to prevent us from peacefully living together, and cooperating in important fields and affairs. Common aspects of our belief are many, our enemies are also common too.
4. We believe that some mysterious hands are working hard to separate us, and to create disputes and

hatred among Muslims, to kindle the fire of enmities! These mysterious hands do not want, Islam to play its vital role after the smash of communism, and to fill the vacancies of materialism. Muslims should not leave their enemies unattended so that they may succeed their impure goals. There now exists a good opportunity for us to present Islam to the world, as it really is.

5. We believe that if all the scholars and the leading men of all sects sit at a round table to discuss the problems sincerely, with pure hearts and far from fanaticism and obstinacy; they will surely solve all the problems they have, and the differences would be reduced if not entirely erased.

Such a meeting was recently held in Zahidan. Shi'a and Sunnis sat at a round table. They had several sincere meetings and as a result came to an end to most of their differences. To end, I pray to our Lord and say:

"Our lord! Forgive us and our brothers who embraced the faith before us, and leave not in our hearts any malice (hatred) towards the faithful. You are compassionate and merciful." (Holy Qur'an, 59: 10)

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